

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1537

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CNO WASHDC

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CHMAAG BONN

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 2795

USCINCEUR FOR ECJG- P

CNO FOR OP-63

E. O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: MASS, NL, GW, FR

SUBJECT: MARITIME PATROL AIRCRAFT SALES IN EUROPE

REF: THE HAGUE 532 (NOTAL)

1. REFTEL POINTED OUT THAT FRENCH PRESSURE ON DUTCH TO INVEST IN ATLANTIQUE II LONG RANGE MARITIME PATROL AIRCRAFT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM WOULD BE A MAJOR FACTOR IN DETERMINING WHETHER GON WOULD OPT FOR ORION OR ATLANTIQUE II. THIS IS STILL TRUE.

2. WE UNDERSTAND AT THIS WEEK'S MEETING OF POMPIDOU AND BRANDT THE ATLANTIQUE II WAS TO BE AN ITEM OF DISCUSSION. THE FRG NAVY'S WAVERING AND POSTPONEMENT OF DECISION ON NEXT PHASE OF ATLANTIQUE II DEVELOPMENT HAS REPORTEDLY CAUSED FRENCH CONCERN AND INCREASED FRENCH POLITICAL PRESSURE ON BONN.
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IN EMBASSY' S VIEW, FURTHER APPROACH BY US TO FRG WOULD BOLSTER COURAGE OF PRO- ORION GERMANS. THE FRG' S DECISION IN THIS MATTER WILL HAVE GREAT INFLUENCE ON GON' S DECISION.

3. A GON DECISION TO INVEST IN THE ATLANTIQUE II NOW COULD MEAN A HIATUS IN DUTCH NAVY CAPABILITY TO PERFORM LONG- RANGE MARITIME PATROL IN THE ATLANTIC, AS ATLANTIQUE II WOULD NOT BE AVAILABLE UNTIL EARLY EIGHTIES. POSSIBILITY ALSO EXISTS THAT ATLANTIQUE II DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM COULD EXPERIENCE COST OVER- RUN UNACCEPTABLE TO DUTCH AND RESULT IN NO REPLACEMENT OF AGING P2 AIRCRAFT.

4. WHILE WE RECOGNIZE THAT THERE ARE OTHER FACTORS AT PLAY IN THIS SITUATION, SUCH AS THE OVERALL FRG- FRENCH RELATIONSHIP, WE RECOMMEND THAT CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO INDUCING FRG TO (A) OPT FOR US MARITIME PATROL AIRCRAFT TYPE OR (B) CONTINUE TO DELAY DECISION TO INVEST IN ATLANTIQUE II DEVELOPMENT.
TANGUY

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